

The
Alcester Grammar



School Record

December, 1943.

Alcester Grammar School Record.

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EDITOR—MR. V. V. DRULLER.

COMMITTEE—

J. PLESTERS, K. WILSON, D. JONES, JOAN HORSEMAN,
STEWART, SHARP, EADIE i.

Editorial.

We are hoping that subscribers will receive this term's 'Record' at the beginning instead of, as in previous years, the middle of December. The increase in circulation resulting from the growth of the school had added to the problems of selling the magazine, and more time is now required at the end of each term for its satisfactory distribution. It may be asked how we manage to continue the regular issue of the 'Record' in wartime. We wish to take this opportunity of saying "thank you" to our printers for making this publication possible; and of expressing our appreciation of all they are doing, in the face of very great difficulties, to keep up the high standard of production.

In recent issues of the magazine we have been sorry not to be able to include many contributions from Old Scholars. We realise that all are very busy nowadays, and that it takes time and effort to sit down and write an article. But we would remind Old Scholars how much their contributions are welcomed. Many are now visiting strange places and seeing strange things, accounts of which may be made interesting to others without the risk of giving away secrets to the enemy. So, if you have anything of interest to write about, do not forget your magazine.

School Register.**Valete.**

- *Austin, W. M. (VI), 1935-43.
 *Buller, J. E. (VI), 1941-43.
 Collett, D. G. W. (VI), 1933-43.
 *Davies, O. M. (VI), 1938-43.
 *Francis, B. C. (VI), 1936-43.
 *Hemming, K. E. (VI), 1936-43.
 *Moizer, B. M. (VI), 1937-43.
 *Savage, D. (VI), 1935-43.
 *Villers, D. A. (VI), 1936-43.
 *Careless, S. M. (Upp. V), 1932-43.
 Carman, P. (Upp. V), 1940-43.
 Parker, C.M. (Upp. V), 1938-43.
 Portman, E. (Upp. V), 1938-43.
 Smart, N. M. (Upp. V), 1933-43.
 Stallard, B. M. (Upp. V), 1940-43.
 Woolnough, H. (Upp. V.), 1940-43
 Wright, J. E. A. (Upp. V), 1938-43.
 Boote, J. L. (Low. VA), 1938-43.

* Prefect.

Salvete.

- Addison, H. A. (IIIA).
 Arnold, J. H. (IIIB).
 Astbury, J. G. (IIIB).
 Bailey, D. L. (IIIB).
 Baylis, R. J. (IIIB).
 Bridges, H. (IIIB).
 Browne, D. F. N. (IIIB).
 Bryan, B. A. (IIIA).
 Buckley, C. E. (Upp. Rem.).
 Butler, B. E. (II).
 Cheadle, J. M. (IIIA).
 Davies, G. W. (II).
 Davis, M. J. N. (IIIB).
 Dipple, D. W. (Low. IVB).
 Edwards, A. J. (IIIB).
 Eadie, R. W. (IIIB).
 Ellis, P. L. (IIIA).
 Finnemore, E. C. (Low. Rem.).
 Finnemore, J. G. (Upp. Rem.).
 Gregory, A. S. (IIIB).
 Hancox, J. H. (IIIA).
 Hartwell, C. A. (IIIA).
 Harwood, R. J. (Upp. Rem.).
 Hemming, A. M. (IIIB).
 Higgs, J. L. (Upper Rem.).
 Hill, D. G. (Upp. Rem.).
 Hunt, J. W. (IIIB).
 Hunt, M. K. (IIIA).
 James, C. A. (Upp. Rem.).
 Jensen, K. B. (IIIB).
 Johnson, R. M. (IIIA).
 Jones, B. (IIIA).
 King, R. (IIIA).
 Kinnersley, E. J. (II).
 Kinnersley, J. W. (IIIB).
 Kinnersley, M. (Upp. Rem.).
 Kinnersley, R. M. (IIIB).
 Knight, G. M. (IIIA).
 Langston, E. S. (IIIB).
 Malpass, M. G. (IIIB).
 Marshall, W. (IIIA).
 McCarthy, P. T. (Low. VA).
 Merryfield, G. (Upp. Rem.).
 Morgan, D. E. (IIIA).
 Oliver, K. M. (IIIB).
 Perkins, S. A. (IIIB).
 Perryman, M. R. (IIIA).
 Pitt, J. R. (IIIB).
 Pumfrey, P. G. (IIIB).
 Reynolds, R. M. P. (Low. Rem.).
 Roberts, K. M. (IIIA).
 Rotherham, J. L. (Upp. Rem.).
 Savage, R. L. (IIIA).
 Silvester, J. E. (IIIA).
 Slaughter, A. E. (IIIA).
 Smith, D. F. (IIIB).
 Snow, D. M. (IIIA).
 Spencer, K. V. (IIIA).
 Spencer, M. D. G. (IIIA).
 Stanley, R. H. (IIIA).
 Stevenson, D. S. (Upp. Rem.).
 Taylor, K. A. (IIIA).
 Terry, E. A. (II).
 Thompson, A. T. (Low. IVB).
 Vale, E. P. (Upp. Rem.).
 Varney, R. F. (IIIB).
 Wadams, B. R. (IIIB).
 Wainwright, J. A. (IIIA).
 Warren, A. (IIIB).
 Williamson, K. R. (IIIB).
 Woodfield, R. G. (IIIB).
 Wyatt, J. B. (IIIA).

There have been 388 pupils in attendance this term.

Old Scholars Guild News.

The fifth Christmas of the war finds many more Old Scholars in uniform, up and down the British Isles or serving overseas, undergoing training or in one or another theatre of war, and our thoughts naturally turn to them at this time, and particularly to those who are far from their homes. Let us hope that by the end of 1944 hostilities in the European theatre at any rate may have ceased, and that those serving may, if not already home, have in prospect an early return. To all Old Scholars we send greetings for Christmas and for the New Year.

Quite often nowadays we are asked the question, what has happened to so and so who was in my form in such and such a year? In many instances we are able to supply the information, but in many others we have to confess that we have had no news for a long time. Often we can give a home address, and that is all. If any reader, therefore, knows about any Old Scholar who has joined the Forces and who has not been referred to in the magazine, the editor will be very grateful for details. We fear that some of the information we print is very much out of date by the time it is read, but we try to give the latest news received up to the date of printing.

H. T. Hewlett, who is an officer in the Merchant Navy, has had some exciting experiences during the past year. Last Boxing Day his ship was torpedoed in mid-Atlantic and he was in the water for two hours before being picked up.

R. W. Down is at present a Sergeant-Instructor in the Air Force in South Africa, and W. G. Hunt is completing his flying training at the same station.

Several Old Scholars have gone to India. Among them are F. Houghton and E. W. Perkins. P. W. Warner is in Ceylon.

We have heard news of a number of Old Scholars in the Mediterranean area. K. Bailey, who was in touch with G. Horton and E. Chattaway in Tunisia, was at Cape Bon, and has more recently been in Sicily. From that island too we hear of L. Earp and S. G. Biddle. B. Smith is in North Africa, and W. G. Gray is in Italy.

D. C. and L. G. Baylis, brothers, whose weddings on the same day took place in November, 1939, and who had not seen each other since that time, met in September this year somewhere in the Middle East.

M. Holman is at a lonely station on an island in the north of the British Isles.

G. R. Wilkes is a special wireless operator on a destroyer.

B. Hodgkinson, now a pilot-officer, was placed first in his class of air bomber crews passed out from a R.C.A.F. station.

Connie Sherwood has been in Egypt and is now back in England. An announcement of her wedding at Cairo appears on another page.

There are two promotions to be recorded. S. C. Styler is now Captain, and F. Duxbury is Flying-Officer.

Among Old Scholars whose service with the Forces has not previously been referred to are Florence Hawkes, who has been a member of the W.A.A.F. since the middle of 1942; R. J. Hunt, who is a cadet in the Merchant Navy; W. G. Snow, who is in the Royal Warwicks; A. G. Steele, who is in the Reconnaissance Corps; Sheila Peel and Joan Bradley, who have joined the A.T.S.; C. H. Bryan, who is in the Royal Navy; and L. Fancote, who is in the Fleet Air Arm.

In our last issue an error was made in the notice about K. Woods. He is in the Worcesters, not the K.S.L.I.

P. R. Groom (née Horseman) who is living in Surrey, is working at the Admiralty.

H. T. Lester, who is a senior chemist at an explosive factory, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Chemistry.

J. R. Orrell, we hear, is articled to a firm of architects in Southport.

R. H. Collier, who was a pupil of A.G.S. for several years, has gone up to Oxford University this term.

Births.

On July 13th, to Mr. and Mrs. Lionel G. Baylis—a daughter.

On August 20th, to Squadron-Leader and Mrs. J. D. Sumner (née Betty Clark)—a son.

On August 28th, to A.C.1 and Mrs. W. J. Canning—a son.

On September 10th, to Dr. and Mrs. V. Chapman—a son.

On October 2nd, to Mr. and Mrs. F. J. Shrimpton—a daughter.

On October 22nd, to Mr. and Mrs. Sydney A. Gothard—a son.

On October 30th, to Captain and Mrs. S. C. Scriven—a son.

Marriages.

On June 28th, at Cairo, Staff-Sergeant Graham Frank Charles MacAleese (R.E.M.E.) to Constance Mary Sherwood (scholar 1931-37).

On October 2nd, at Studley, Frank Metcalf Aspin to Winifred Mary Walters (scholar 1925-32).

On November 20th, at Arrow, Albert Arthur Graham to Evelyn Joyce Taylor (scholar 1935-38).

Mostly Pro's.

Early last January on a snowy day, a dumpy figure with a large case arrived in front of the Royal Hospital, with a well-I've-come-where-are-the-flags? expression on her face. What she had to learn was that a Junior Probationer should "be seen and not heard, come when she is called, and shut the door after her," a hard lesson for someone who is used to being heard.

Needless to say, that person was me. Together with nine other equally raw recruits, I had arrived to begin my

training, and I must admit I was a little surprised at the unconcern our arrival caused. But that soon wore off, and joy took the place of surprise as we put on our striped uniform dresses, white aprons, caps and belts.

For the first two months we were in the Training School. This involved a daily battle with a gruesome skeleton known as Jimmy and kept in a cupboard, numerous grinning skulls, painted bright colours, and a large collection of deathly white bones, as well as lectures in Hygiene and Anatomy and Physiology. There were the intricacies of bandaging to be mastered, during the course of which we either got tied to our chairs or found ourselves with head bandages round our necks.

Then came a written examination, and a viva with Matron. By the time I emerged I should have been "mortua" (?). On being asked the contents of the chest cavity I missed out the heart! But although heartless I passed the examination and began full time ward work.

The Junior on a ward gets more joy out of life than anyone, in spite of being a general "dog's body." She has just enough responsibility to be happy, and enough work to keep her out of mischief. Apart from keeping out of Sister's immediate line of fire, my chief jobs were polishing lockers, generally keeping both patients and the ward clean, and forcing reluctant men to drink pints of fluids.

After three months day duty I went on night duty. The night staff is considerably smaller than the day staff, and on the ward where I worked there was only a senior nurse and myself. The first night I was scared someone would throw a fit or go into a coma, but nothing happened and my confidence strengthened. And after I had been to the theatre for the first time no one could touch me with a barge pole.

Night duty has its lighter moments, when one consumes large quantities of tea behind the kitchen door in case Night Sister is on the trail, and the difficulty of disguising the smell of toasted cheese is acute.

But even Nurses are ill sometimes, and after a month's night duty I came off sick. Even now, five weeks later, I am sitting in a ward, not as a Nurse, but as a patient, anxiously waiting for the day or night I can go back on duty.

P. M. CRESSWELL.

Auction Sales.

Auction sales have always held the greatest fascination for me. Ever since I can remember I have attended them on every possible occasion. I was initiated into the peculiar mysteries of the auctioneer's art at the tender age of four when I first accompanied my father to the cattle market. I can still see it quite clearly—the lowing, restive cattle, the bustling farmers and butchers in their smocks and leggings, and the occasional excitement when a recalcitrant cow refused to be loaded and broke away. There is nothing so exciting as the tense atmosphere that prevails when two rival butchers are bidding against each other for a much-coveted prize bullock or heifer. The loser, with a not very convincing air of nonchalance tries to look as if he never had any real interest in the animal, and the overjoyed victor makes a laughably unsuccessful attempt to hide his jubilation. Market days in war-time have lost their magic quality. There is no joy in them any more. The friendly rivalries and the thrill of the conflict are no more; they have faded into the mist of oblivion that shrouds all the good things that used to be. Market days in these prosaic times are merely a question of distribution. One doesn't bid for one's cattle, one has them "allocated." How I hate that word! It is a vicious mockery of the past glories I have enjoyed.

No less exciting are the ordinary common or garden sales which are conducted in private houses. Perhaps you are finding it difficult to believe that a sale could provide the background for exciting adventure, but I assure you that you are wrong. At a sale I went to with my mother when I was about eight I was enraptured with a large and imposing stone statue of Zeus. It had a piece chipped off it and the former owner had become tired of the colour and had made a rather unsuccessful attempt to whitewash it. But even these drawbacks could not serve to diminish its glories in my eyes. While my mother was viewing the next room of furniture to be sold I remained with my newly discovered hero. I stood as near to him as I could and when the auctioneer came to Lot number 45 I found I could not bear to part with him so soon after having found him. So I made a quick decision—I began to bid. I was rescued at the eleventh hour by an extremely agitated and irate parent, who had no desire to remove most of the family furniture in order to house my new acquaintance. For the

rest of the day I found myself firmly clasped by the hand in order to prevent my making any further embarrassing purchases. In vain did I explain that my pocket money would pay for him, and that he could repose in the garage in company with the discarded bronze fern stand and the photograph of my grandfather with the broken glass. My arguments were dismissed as unworthy of notice and I had perforce to wish my Zeus a tearful goodbye.

I was reminded of the happy times I used to spend at auction sales when I attended one during the half term holidays. It was the first one I had been to for a long time. I felt again, as if for the first time, the old thrill of the mounting bids. The magic of the auctioneer's voice calling, "twenty-two, twenty-two, twenty-three? twenty-three? Thank you, twenty-three, twenty three. Have you all done gentlemen? Lot number 52 is sold to Mr.—? what is the name sir? Thank you." The eagle eye of the auctioneer has an almost hypnotic effect upon me. If I meet his eye when he is asking for bids it is only through the supreme exercise of my self control that I prevent myself from nodding my head and acknowledging the bid. It is interesting but rather frightening to speculate upon the miscellaneous collection I should have acquired by now had I always given way to the impulse.

One always thinks of a hammer as the insignia of the auctioneer, so that one might end with an invocation to the Gods, "may the rule of the hammer continue glorious." But I must make one amendment; my favourite auctioneer always uses his spectacle case.

A SALE HABITUÉ.

Urba Querantis.

Hark, Words: O Words! the precious gift of time,
 The monopoly of man, his means to rule,
 The artisan's release, the traitor's crime,
 The human measure to decide the fool.
 The land of words is ever my escape,
 My chance to love and hate in people past,
 A world of wondrous sound and fairy shape.
 Realities of earth are all surpassed.
 There is no poverty where words are loved:
 Strange castles rise as though by magic wand,
 Every obstruction can by pen be moved,
 Rich history lies within the hinter-land.
 —And never will I prick my bubbles dear
 For this horrific infant, Basic drear.

K.M.W.

Notes and News.

The Autumn term opened on Wednesday, September 8th and closes on Thursday, December 16th.

The head girl is K. Wilson, and the head boy is Stewart. The other prefects are:—**Senior:** M. Goodall, J. Plesters, W. Archer, J. Godwin; **Arnold**, Yapp, Burns, Sharp, Ore, Kirby. **Junior:** B. Adams, E. Rose, J. Blakeman, C. Sainsbury, M. Prior, N. Nash, G. Bloxham, Joan Horseman; Hancox, Hillman, Mortimer.

The Sides captains are:—**Brownies:** J. Plesters and Stewart. **Jackals:** K. Wilson and Arnold. **Tomtits:** M. Goodall and Yapp.

Speech Day was Wednesday, July 21st, when the address was given by Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham.

In the final of the Tennis Gold Medal Tournament, D. Villers beat J. Blakeman, 6—4, 2—6, 6—3.

Tennis colours were presented at the close of last term to D. Villers (for the second time), S. Careless (for second time), B. Adams, J. Allen, A. Villers.

Cricket caps were awarded to Hillman and Burns.

The cricket bat (presented by Mr. A. Baylis as a memorial to his son, Tony) was awarded to Hillman.

At the end of last term Miss Slote, Miss Seeley and Miss Alexander left the staff. This term we welcome Miss R. F. Mullens (who is teaching English), Miss E. F. Chandler (who is teaching German and French), and Miss F. P. Crapp (who is teaching in the Preparatory Department).

In a recent letter to Mr. Caton, Mr. S. F. Bates says that he has had a much-appreciated move from Ceylon to India. He has found quite a good piano, but has little leisure to make use of it.

Mr. L. Jackson is now attached to Western Command.

On the result of the Higher School examination in July, M. Austin was awarded a State scholarship.

M. Moizer has gained a Warwickshire County training grant for Domestic Science.

A lecture on the making of soft toys was given to senior girls on October 8th by Mrs. E. G. Hunt.

Miss Chandler is School Salvage Steward in succession to Miss Slote.

The week October 11th—15th was Potato Week. On these days parties composed of boys and girls of the Middle School assisted local farmers in the lifting of the potato crop.

D. G. Collett has gained an Engineering cadetship at Birmingham University.

This term the Upper Fifth has become too large to be taught as one form and is divided into two parallel sections. From the preparatory department Form i has now disappeared, while Remove has been split into an Upper and Lower division.

So far there is no visible sign of any progress towards the erection of the canteen mentioned in our last issue, though all kinds of rumours about an early start on the scheme are prevalent. Meanwhile more and more pupils have school dinner, and during the dinner hour one is liable to come across small groups of pupils feeding in quite unexpected rooms. For instance, the Sixth now dine in their own small room, and a party of girls is to be found taking their meal in the Upper Fourth classroom.

In the recess at the foot of the stairs may now be found on the wall a locked wire-fronted cupboard. Through the wire may be seen—all numbered in white paint—eighty pairs of gym shoes which are loaned to pupils.

We wish to record our thanks to Dr. V. Chapman for his gift to the school of a collection of biological slides.

Also to J. E. Buller for a donation to the library funds.

Our best wishes to Miss Cookson (now Mrs. Shepperd) who was married during the summer holidays.

It is with regret that we record the death, on October 23rd, of Canon T. J. Chapman, who was for many years a governor of the School, and for much of that period vice-chairman of that body. A party of pupils represented A.G.S. at the funeral service in Alcester Church.

Among successful candidates in last July's school certificate examinations we see the name of B. W. Betterton, who was for a time a pupil of this school.

Our thanks to Dr. Burns, of Redditch, for his offer to the school of a prize for biology for the next three years.

The Spencer cup, to be awarded to the candidate placed first in the July examinations for School certificate, has been won by Kirby.

Early this term a National Savings competition was held to stimulate interest in the School Savings Group. The winners, Burden, C. Saunders and M. Slaughter, received savings stamps.

Half term was Friday, October 29th, and Monday, November 1st. An extra day, Tuesday, November 2nd, was added in recognition of M. Austin's scholarship success.

During the greater part of the summer holiday the school buildings were used by the Warwickshire Agricultural Committee to accommodate school girls who were helping local farmers.

We regret that, through an unfortunate error on the part of our printers, the third verse of Mary Parker's poem, "The Clerk's Dream," on page 74 of the July issue, was meaningless. If for the last line of that verse the line "To catch a woman's scolding" is substituted, the verse will become intelligible.

Among former scholars at universities and colleges this term are:—**London University:** M. Austin and M. Moizer; **Birmingham University:** K. Hemming and J. Buller; **Birmingham Technical School:** D. G. Collett; **Nottingham University:** C. Sanders; **Bingley Training College:** A. Aspinwall and B. Francis; **Gloucester Training College:** M. Crompton and D. Villers; **Norwich Training College:** O. Davies; **Southampton University College:** P. G. Chatterley.

As last autumn, a collection of rose hips for medicinal use has been organised by Miss Weatherup. This year a competition between forms was arranged. The grand total collected was 350 lbs. The certificate for the highest average was awarded to Lower IVa with 2.4 lbs. per person; the runners-up were Upper IVb with an average of 2 lbs; third came Lower Va with an average of 1.8 lbs.

By winning all their matches during the 1943 season, the girls' tennis team have now completed three successive seasons without the loss of a match.

Groaning Up.

The other day I opened a long-forgotten cupboard and wondered vaguely whose could be the collection of junk within. After a few moments I recognised the willow wand with which I used to sling lumps of wet clay at my brother. Surely another queer object was familiar, and although it seems incredible now, at one time the apparently shapeless piece of wood was the tommy-gun with which I had defied the Big Five of Scotland Yard and which had taken part in many daring bank raids. I gingerly prodded a dust-covered lump which might be either modelling clay or fossilised toffee, and I smiled to think of the grotesque zoological specimens which had been evolved therefrom. At the back of the shelf was a knobbly lump of veined quartz which I had treasured for many a month in defiance of maternal criticisms and strictures regarding the wear of trouser pockets.

With rather a shock I realised that my bookcase is more important now than the toy cupboard, and a new dictionary pleases me more than a piece of catapult elastic.

Sometimes as my friends and I stroll sedately round the playing field and see the younger pupils rolling in the dirt I wonder if after all they get more enjoyment from life than we do and, yielding to temptation, I surreptitiously throw an apple core at one of the prefects in front.

D. H. EADIE (Upp. V).

Old Father Time.

There was a little old man sitting under a tree in the garden of a tiny cottage. It was a sweet little cottage, definitely English, with a row of forget-me-nots raising their shy heads around the bench on which this old gentleman was sitting. This cottage, according to the inhabitants of the village, was supposed to belong to Old Father Time, and they maintained that once every year the legendary old man visited his cottage to tidy it and to dust his furniture. Nobody would venture near it. I am rather ashamed to say that I made many enemies in that quaint old hamlet by openly scoffing at the villagers for believing this story. "Everyone knows that Father Time is just an imaginary person," I said condescendingly to a be-whiskered old gent who had been telling me about their legend. The poor old thing was quite proud of his knowledge too. "Ah missie, you go to that cottage and 'ave a look round. Unless Time has been already the dust will be thick everywhere, but ye jest go to-morrow an' everywhere will be spotless," he told me.

Of course I have forgotten to tell you that it was on this day that the legendary old gentleman was supposed to pay his annual visit. Feeling slightly nervous and very dubious I made my way down the narrow lane that led to this mysterious domain.

You can imagine my complete surprise then, when as I have said, I saw this little old man sitting under a blossoming apple tree in the garden. True to the legend he had a flowing white beard and his shoulders were bent as if from having to bear a too heavy burden. I began to feel rather shaky and my hands were shaking like pre-war jellies. Just then he glanced up and saw me and I noticed how tired and pathetic he looked sitting there alone. Nevertheless I wanted to run away, but my legs refused to function and my heart was thudding heavily against my ribs. Then he called out to me not to be afraid but to go in and to speak to him as he was really very harmless. At the sound of his gentle voice all my fears vanished and, opening the lovely old rustic gate, I walked up the small stone-flagged path to where he was sitting. To me he seemed to be just a small, tired little man badly in need of someone to speak to. He asked me if I would mind going inside the cottage as he had some work to do. I only remember making some appropriate reply and followed him inside.

Then I seemed to be transported from my peaceful and serene surroundings into the middle of a noisy and strange scene. Somewhere a gentle voice was speaking, telling of scenes and tragedies with which I was vaguely familiar. Then I realised that I was hearing about Poland, France, Holland, Belgium, Greece, Czechoslovakia and many other countries now under German domination. That quiet and sad voice told me of the hope of millions of people, of the brutality and coarseness of the Nazis. It also told me of the greediness and heartlessness of a few Englishmen, who thought about everything in terms of money, of the determination of the women, who were doing such important work and yet just being tolerated by many men. Oh! I heard much on that Spring afternoon, and I know that that scene will always remain in my memory. You can call me sentimental and stupid if you wish. I don't care.

Suddenly all was quiet. I waited silently for that voice to continue, but silence reigned. I looked up. There was no one there. I hadn't been asleep; of that I was certain, because I had been noticing a bird building its nest in the hedge outside. I searched everywhere, but my elderly companion had vanished! I have never found out who he was, or where he went to, but before I went away I noticed that everywhere was spotlessly clean; there was no dust to be seen anywhere.

JOAN HORSEMAN (Upp. V).

A Country Policeman.

This man is a very stout one; he has large feet, which he puts down noiselessly. He has a helmet on which looks as if it might fit two heads at once. It covers up most of his head and comes on to his shoulders.

He seems to be the only one who tries to keep people from showing too many lights. With his very gruff words he gets obeyed at once. Another thing at which he seems to get on very well, is telling cyclists about having no lights. After fumbling in all his pockets he finds at last his much worn note book. He proceeds to write down their names and addresses, and coolly tells them he will have the pleasure of meeting them once again at the next Petty Sessions. After he has done this he goes quietly round the back of the Village Inn to have a "quick one."

M. LAYTON (Upp. IVb).

The Christmas Spirit.

About a year ago, during an informal discussion, the question was raised, "When you are old in years how can you tell if you are still young in heart?" and someone replied, "I think that, if you still feel really thrilled on Christmas Eve, you are young in heart."

Though some old sages may shake their heads and say "Ah, Christmas is not what it used to be," the feeling of goodwill which surrounds Christmas is still quite prevalent. I cannot believe there are even a few Scrooges amongst us whom the joy of Christmas leaves completely untouched. Of course we do know some harassed fathers who, with one foot balanced precariously on the step ladder and hair festooned with holly and paper chains, grunt, "It will be a good thing when Christmas is all over," but I am sure they only adopt that attitude so as not to lose what little dignity is left to them in such an incongruous pose.

Christmas Eve, in my opinion, is the most thrilling time of the year. There is an air of expectancy everywhere. It always seems starry on Christmas Eve, as if the stars were waking up, and there is a hush on the air, and in the spirit of the time we too sit by the wood fire and wait. A year or so ago the electricity supply failed on Christmas Eve and we had to sit in candle-light and firelight. Whatever house you visited people were sitting in the light of the fire, not listening to the wireless or reading the evening paper, but just waiting, and thinking, and talking about Christmas.

The Christmas feeling seems to be in the air much earlier in the last few years. Already people are shopping for gifts in case stocks should run out. Packing parcels, indeed, used to be great fun, when gay holly-sprigged wrapping paper, silver tinsel ribbon and bright labels were not only obtainable, but ridiculously cheap. Now, however, we are reduced to practical but prosaic brown paper parcels.

Then comes Christmas cooking. We can still have some sort of Christmas pudding, although it may not be of the rich brown-black it used to be. We can still have some Christmas decorations too, and there is the Christmas tree, if you are lucky enough to have one; a joy for all, but especially the small children, who are surprised and delighted by this new wonder.

Singing is also an important part of the festivities. Never do we sing so heartily together as we do when singing carols. Everyone knows the tunes and most of the words.

Of recent years most carol singing takes place indoors. This is a pity for the sound of carols sung by the "waits" on a clear frosty night must have been delightful. The only carol singer we had last year was a single small boy who stood valiantly with one foot on the doorstep, his hands in his pockets, his face turned to the stars, and sang verse after verse of "Good King Wenceslas" in a beautiful high clear voice. An effort worthy of Wenceslas himself! though I doubt if our young singer regarded the good King of Bohemia as anything more than a legendary figure.

No one wants wars at Christmas time. Everybody is looking forward to the time when people of all nations will be free to celebrate Christmas in their own homes and in their own way. Then we shall experience again that glorious sense of unity which comes from knowing that at this one particular season of the year millions of people all over the world are feeling and thinking and doing the same things as ourselves.

R. J. PLESTERS (VI).

A School Alphabet.

A is for Art—Paint, Pencil and Brush;
B is for Break—to the door we all rush.
C is for Cane—be good or you'll get it!
D for Detention—and don't you forget it!
E is for Early—we all ought to be;
F is for French—(l'arbre is a tree).
G is for Geography—maps by the score;
H is for History—we learn more and more,
I is for Inner in hockey we play;
J is for Jumping—to keep fit they say.
K is for Kicks—we sometimes get these;
L is for Library—no fines, if you please!
M is for Music—all sing together;
N is for Netball—we play in fine weather.
O is for Orange—we don't see many;
P is for Prep—do mine for a Penny.
Q for Quadratic—Equations you know;
R for Reports—marks high and low.
S is for Sports Day—we all like this;
T is for Tests—we should like to miss.
U is for "Ullus"—Latin for "Any."
V for Vacations—we wish we had many.
W for Work—we all try to do;
X is too hard—I'll leave it to you.
Y is for Year—twelve months we are taught.
Z is for Zero, and nothing and nought.

JOAN FAULKNER (Upp. IVa).

A Happy Afternoon.

I ran down the garden path to find some worms for fishing. After hunting all over the garden, I found a patch in a rubbish dump. I hastily washed my face, got my fishing-rod, line, worms in a tobacco tin and a haversack. Then, taking my father's bicycle, I started off. Everything went all right and I got permission to start fishing. I had several bites, but my only catch was a tiddler, which looked so dismal that I threw it back in. There were three other people fishing, a man and two youths, one of whom was six feet tall. His head was jammed into his shoulders, he had broad-rimmed glasses and jet black hair. I thought what a funny-looking youth he was and changed my fishing place. As I cast out my line, it caught on a branch. I climbed the tree and tugged at the branch. Then I noticed that my rod was nearly in the water; so I quickly got down and rescued it. I tugged at the line and broke the branch. Next I tried to cast the line, but it caught in my trousers and broke the hook off. So I decided to go home.

On the way I found my rod missing, so, putting down my father's bicycle, I hunted about, but, getting thirsty, I went to a cottage for a drink. As no one was about, I went back towards the mill, found my rod and line broken up and the float missing. I picked up father's bicycle and found that the pedals would not go round. So, pushing the bicycle, carrying the haversack, worms in the tobacco tin, broken fishing rod and my jacket, I trudged homewards. The sight of a rosy apple gave me fresh heart and, finding that the bicycle would still run downhill, I arrived home at last. I got a large piece of cake for tea. I will not say what Father said about his bicycle or Mother about my trousers.

HADWEN iii (IIIA).

Autumn.

As autumn visits us to-day,
The skies are overcast and grey;
While leaves come drifting earthward on the breeze,
To make a pleasant carpet 'neath the trees,
Which lift aloft their arms,
Deprived of Nature's charms,
Like skeletons standing alone,
To face the storms with many a moan;
Till spring comes round, to wake with loving hand
The sleeping earth, with one touch of her wand.

GRAY II (Low. Va).

Things I see and Hear.

By the school clock.

You must understand that I am no ordinary clock as was my predecessor. I am an electric clock, but although I have changed, the scenes I see below me are very like those of the old days.

The children still run along the corridor when they are not under a prefect's eye. I hear singing from the Art Room above me, sometimes pleasing, sometimes not. What a scurry in the morning when the children go into prayers; how I like to hear their voices singing the old hymns.

Although my back is to the Hall I know by the sounds when a gym lesson is being taken. The bumps and thumps of feet on the floor, the creaking of the beams as they come down, the squeak of the ropes as they swing to and fro, all help me to picture the happy scene that is going on inside. From time to time I see the boy come to ring the bell. Then, what a buzz of voices comes from every classroom!

It's a fine life being a school clock, and as I tick through the silent hours of the night, I look forward to the morning, when the busy life will begin again.

ANNE HEMMING (IIIB).

The Zoo.

As I went walking through the Zoo,
I saw a baby kangaroo;
It looked as though 'twas in a couch,
Inside its Mother's cosy pouch.

Next came Ape sitting in state,
Eating bananas off a plate;
He looked as though he was king of them all,
He wore a crown with a tinsel ball.

But best of all were the talking parrots;
They didn't like cake and they didn't like carrots;
So Goodbye to Ape and Kangaroo,
And the parrots said, "Good-bye to you."

PAMELA FEAST (Low. IVa).

An Intruder.

It was on a cold, foggy, winter evening, when a very peculiar incident happened, which I am about to relate to you.

We had a lovely fire, the flames of which were blazing up the chimney (a thing which, I know, is not at all patriotic in war-time) and naturally, knowing myself, I remember sitting in an arm chair, roasting myself in front of the fire. If I recall it correctly, I was doing some needlework, but this does not greatly concern us. My mother was busy at the time, and apparently her work took her upstairs, because I remember quite distinctly having heard her sing a popular tune as she ascended the stairs. But suddenly, quite suddenly, as a matter of fact, she stopped singing and I heard a sharp gasp.

My needlework had by this time fallen from my hands and I was on my feet making my way towards the foot of the stairs. But before I was able to reach them my mother called, telling me to go upstairs quickly. Her voice sounded both mysterious and intimidated. I ascended very dubiously, wondering what to expect when I reached the top step. My mother's voice seemed to have come from my bedroom, but I could see no signs of anyone or anything up there. I remembered that my black-outs had not been drawn and consequently I could not switch on the electric light; and probably I should not have dared to do such a thing either, for, as I approached the door of my room, I was frightened by a certain noise, which came from the other side of the open door. Then my mother made known her presence by a second gasp. This calmed me a little, for at least I knew where she was.

Then with some effort, I spoke, my voice being somewhat off its usual tone.

"What is that noise?" I asked fearfully.

"I d-do not know w-what it is," came the reply.

I suddenly regained a little courage and decided to walk very quietly through the doorway, hoping not to disturb whatever might be behind it and cross to the window in order to draw the curtains. This I did somewhat timidly and my nerves seemed to be quite uncomfortable. I leaned across the bed, and switched on the light. Then I returned to the place where my mother was standing, and I may say that she was only just inside the room. I peered behind the door.

My heart seemed to stop beating as I realised what a coward I had been to be afraid of such a small thing as a bird. You can imagine what a relief it was to find such an innocent thing, although when I proceeded to find out what kind of bird it was I realised it was not so innocent after all. It was a starling.

But I must curtail my comments and tell you the sequel. The bird hopped down the stairs and hid itself in the kitchen. Both my mother and father tried to find it but without success. It happened that we had a rabbit hung in the pantry and when we unhooked it in order to prepare it for a meal to be eaten the following day, the bird came from its hiding place which was behind a stack of pudding basins. It was then put in the green house, the door of which was left open and the starling was allowed to do as it pleased, either stay there for the night or join its relatives elsewhere.

DOROTHY JONES (Upp. V).

Fire Watching.

One cold, miserable, December evening, I was sitting huddled up in an armchair by a blazing fire. I picked up the newspaper. All men of certain ages had to register for Fire Watching. I immediately thought of all the men who lived near by who would be affected, little realising that my own father would be a victim of this cruel night torture.

I was certainly not envying anyone who was on duty this particular night. The huge fire I was sitting beside made me feel very sleepy. I was going farther and farther away.

"Ugh ! How cold it is," I said to my neighbour, a young girl suitably clad for the weather.

"I wish there was a fire out here ; we could warm ourselves, couldn't we ?" she said.

"Yes. After all, we are supposed to watch fires, aren't we !" I replied.

After waiting for half an hour longer, we decided that the Luftwaffe would think it was too cold to come out, and we returned to the canteen to have a hot drink. All I had was a trickle of cold water running down my face.

"I suppose you have been watching this fire go out ?" my mother said.

I certainly had been "fire watching," hadn't I ?

SHEILA STALLARD (Low.VA).

An Interesting Experience.

During the holidays another boy and I, from our choir at Tanworth, went to a School of English Church Music course at St. John's School, Leatherhead, Surrey.

We travelled there alone. As the London train was very crowded, the guard said we could go with him, in the guard's van, from Snow Hill to Paddington. The engine was the King George VI. The "kings" are some of Britain's fastest engines. We went through four long tunnels, the one through the Chilterns being the longest. We also passed an aerodrome. At Paddington we were met by a "universal aunt." She took us across London to Waterloo station by tube train. It was the first time I had ever been on one. The doors open and shut automatically at the stations. From Waterloo to Leatherhead we travelled in an electric train.

On our arrival at St. John's School, we were greeted by Sir Sidney Nicholson, director of the S.E.C.M., who was directing the course. There were about fifty boys and twenty men taking the course. We only used part of the school. Each day we had two services and two practices; the rest of the time we were free to do what we liked. One day we went swimming in a nearby river; another day we had sports. One evening we had a concert; my friend Peter took part in a sketch, because he is good at acting. Another evening we had a lecture and a discussion about choir boys.

We returned home with our choirmaster Dr. Stanton, who had come to give a lecture to the men. This time we crossed London in a taxi, seeing the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, Marble Arch and Hyde Park on our way. At Paddington, Dr. Stanton obtained permission for us to get on and look at the engine, King Charles II. On the train we had lunch. This was another new experience for me.

A. K. ROGERS (Low. IVB).

Camp 1945.

(Unofficial report).

Alarm and despondency filled the hearts of twenty six cadets as they surveyed the site of their residence for the next seven days, through the misty windows of a Midland 'Red.' It was not a pleasant scene. Through the driving rain might

be seen rows of dirty brown tents stretching down to a sheet of water going by the name of Powell's Pool, which seemed likely to expand and engulf the whole camp.

The first holiday task was the search for bedding. This bedding consisted of a pally ass, and several blankets, not to mention a hard round bag which had the insolence to call itself a pillow. Much difficulty was experienced in going to bed. Although it is rumoured that the army pack twenty men into one tent, it seemed to the occupants of one particular tent more the task of a geometrician than of a weary youth to fit seven large bodies and their larger baggage into a tiny circle. However, when heads and feet had been fitted in together, instead of slumber, they found themselves "occupying their business in great waters," which were flowing in at one side of the tent and out at the other. It was then that the order was given for the evacuation of the position for better lodgings, half a mile away. The sight of half-dressed and bedraggled refugees straggling with their baggage through mud rivalling that of Flanders, would have rent any man's heart.

When the same morning dawned cadets and baggage returned to the scene of desolation, and then the real work of the camp started. Every day each company went out to enjoy themselves and be instructed. One favourite scheme was a sort of military hide and seek, where the hider, with much difficulty, and pain from the all-perforating gorse bushes would attempt to conceal himself from the view of the following hounds.

A route march, in which several companies took part, filled up one morning. In spite of the repeated rests, some poor cadets suffered terrible agonies with their feet. This resulted in a foot inspection, where the officers, their own feet hidden from the critical gaze of all within their brown boots, advised the administering of iodine upon raw places.

The afternoons were spent in various types of instructive recreation. On one occasion an excursion was made to Keeper's Pool where the hardier cadets immersed themselves in almost freezing water. Another afternoon passed by on the shooting range, where all shots were kept within ten feet of the target. On the last afternoon Battalion Sports were held, in which Alcester did not disgrace itself or its company.

The evenings were in many ways the most enjoyable for the Cadets, for there was plenty of scope for individual

tastes for amusement in the Park. Some, with pockets full of money made their way to a place containing roundabouts and some shove ha'penny booths. Others with a taste for water sport and exercise went to Blackroot Pool.

The Food, which was dished out to the clamouring cadets deserves more than a passing word. A large part of the day was spent in queuing up before the doors of the large tents until those individuals on cookhouse fatigue came staggering along with large 'dixies' full of food which was seldom describable. But although the food was not dainty nobody, as far as can be ascertained, died of starvation that week. The regular rations were sometimes augmented by surreptitious banquets in the tents at night. In one tent at least good fare was enjoyed, for one of the occupants lived at an establishment where crisps, ginger-beer and biscuits were still obtainable.

No efforts were spared to give the cadets a good time. The officers provided a concert with their own talent, while a Brain's Trust of some of the wiser officers gave more amusement than instruction. For the less ambitious the Y.M.C.A. conducted competitions for talent in the ranks. Once again Alcester distinguished itself with the strains of the "White Cliffs of Dover."

When the time came at long last to go home, the tents were pulled down and packed up. It is significant that the week could not have been too strenuous for the cadets, since everyone found voice for a song as the 'bus swung out of sight of Powell's Pool.

TWO RECRUITS.

Neddy.

Along the sands a donkey came,
Carrying a small child who was lame,
Neddy was the donkey's name;
A nice name for a donkey.

Neddy'd travelled far and wide,
All across the countryside,
Helping the poor lame child to hide
From her cruel father.

Still the donkey carried on
Till he came to the River Don,
Wherein he sank and died anon,
So did the poor lame child.

WENDY McFARLANE (Low. IVb).

Oxford Examinations, 1945.

The following candidates were successful in the examinations held in July :—

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE : Group 2 (Modern Studies)—
W. M. Austin (distinctions in English and History), J. M. Stewart.

SCHOOL CERTIFICATE :—*E. M. Adams (6 credits), *W. B. Archer (7 credits), E. J. Blakeman (2 credits), J. M. Godwin (6 credits), N. G. Kirby (7 credits), D. Ore (5 credits), *E. M. Rose (6 credits), J. V. Sharp (8 credits), N. M. Smart (4 credits), B. M. Stallard (2 credits), J. E. A. Wright (4 credits).

* Qualified to claim exemption from London Matriculation Examination.

National Savings.

Savings for the half year, April to October, amounted to £1,741 1s. and during October about £280 has been added. Membership stands at 250.

The number of regular savers steadily increases. **Maximum result can only be obtained when each individual member makes it his personal responsibility to bring savings regularly—much or little—**Delinquent members bring savings willingly when their memories are jogged. Those who have the habit of regular saving, rarely forget.

Savings are still taken on Wednesdays in U IV A Room, during the dinner interval.

Results of guessing competition are given on another page.

Scouts.

Our numbers are well maintained again this term. At the annual meeting of the Local Association, held in October, it was found that our troop is the only one in the district in full working order in war-time. It is therefore up to us to work and to keep the true Scout spirit alive in this district. Lack of uniform is still a great handicap and I should be grateful to any of our old scouts who will spare their uniform for sale. We have appointed P.L. Gray as Troop Leader, and it is hoped that all scouts will give him their loyal and active support. I hope the keenness of passing tests will continue, so that by the end of the year we may be able to show many First Class Scouts.

E. S. WALKER, S.M.

Cadets.

O.C.—LIEUTENANT E. W. HADWEN.

In the August Holidays twenty-six Cadets attended the first camp of the 11th Warwickshire Cadet Battalion at Powell's Pool, Sutton Park. During the week of their stay the cadets had a varied programme including a route march, field-craft, shooting, swimming and sports.

Five cadets were successful in passing the first part of their War Certificate A Examination held at Budbrooke Barracks in July and one, Sergeant Arnold, has now gained his full certificate.

This term, training has continued steadily for both the first and second part of the Certificate A. A Visit was paid to the Unit on October 8th by Major Smith, assistant-inspector of Cadet Training, who expressed satisfaction at the progress being made by the Cadets.

J. M. STEWART Cdt. C.S.M.

Football.

CAPTAIN—HILLMAN.

The first eleven started this term, with a team weakened by the loss of some players of the previous season. This was the chief cause of the team not settling down for a few weeks, and consequently the results of the first few matches were bad. The defence, which consists largely of players who have had experience, has played consistently throughout the term. But the forwards, who had not played together before were weak in front of goal. This is being improved by practice, and we hope for better results later in the season.

RESULTS TO DATE:—

- A.G.S. v. Bromsgrove C.H.S. (home) lost 1—6.
 - v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (away) lost 0—14.
 - v. Redditch C.H.S. (away) lost 2—4.
 - v. Redditch C.H.S. (home) lost 0—7.
 - v. King's Norton S.S. (home) lost 0—1.
 - v. Bromsgrove C.H.S. (away) lost 2—10.
 - v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (home) lost 4—13.
 - v. No. 1422 Squadron A.T.C. (home), won 14—0.
- SIDES MATCHES: Jackals 1, Tomtits 0; Brownies 9, Tomtits 1;
Brownies 3, Jackals 1.

G.J.H.

Hockey.

CAPTAIN—J. BLAKEMAN.

The standard of hockey has shown a definite improvement in our practice games this season, and we are hoping to be strong enough to give our various opponents really good games. We have lost most of last season's forward line, but the new one is beginning to settle down, and will, we trust, be good for plenty of goals. Our defence is unchanged.

A second eleven has been formed this term, and we wish them good fortune in their games. The experience they gain should stand them in good stead when later on they come to fill vacancies in the first team.

RESULTS:

A.G.S. v. Redditch C.H.S. (home) lost 1—3.
v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (home)

E.J.B.

Cricket, 1943.

Played	Won	Lost	Drawn
6	1	3	2

Supplementary result.—A.G.S. v. Bromsgrove C. H. S. (home), drawn, 36 for 6—143 for 8.

The Vagabond.

Through the woods and through the vale,
Over the hills and across the dale,
Up the mountain crowned with snow;
That's the way I wandering go.

Through the village and through the towns,
Over the moor and over the downs,
Through the marshes by the bog;
The whole year I wander with Lassie my dog.

By the haystacks past the farm,
Sleeping on straw within a barn,
Selling clothes-pegs in the snow;
That's the way I wandering go.

Whatever the season, Summer and Spring,
Winter and Autumn, when birds cease to sing;
Whatever the future, no cares trouble me,
For Lassie and I will always be free.

WENDY HOWES (Low. Vb).

Salvage Drive.

I have gathered lots of tins,
I have gathered lots of bones.
I've had rags from Mrs. Smith,
And jars from Mrs. Jones.

And now the drive is over,
And I think of all I've done,
I know that it will help,
To beat the beastly Hun.

But I often sit and wonder.
As I look at our bulging bins,
Why they seem to take so long
To cart away our tins.

KATHLEEN ROBERTS (IIIa).

Salute to R.A.F.

Where are they going
This evening so clear?
They are off on a raid,
Without any fear.

What is the objective
This evening so bright?
Perhaps to Berlin or Cologne,
They are making their flight.

And when they return
The next morning so bright,
They have done such great damage
With losses so light.

And remember the escorts,
Those fighters so small,
Who defended the bombers,
Salute to them all!

GANDERTON (Upp. IVa).

For the Juniors.

Our Mouse.

One day when I came home from school, I sat down to tea and suddenly noticed a little mouse playing on the lawn outside the window. The same thing happened the next day. So Daddy bought a trap and set it by the hole. We looked in the morning and there was no mouse and the next morning there was still no mouse, but next morning the cheese had gone and the next morning we caught him by the tummy, and we haven't seen a mouse since.

A. WEAVER (Upp. Remove).

Autumn Fairies.

The little leaf fairies danced with the wind up at the top of the tree, looking very pretty in their new dresses of red, yellow and brown. One little fairy who had a fruit near her took it and ate it. The other fairies were jealous of her and wanted a fruit too. One little fairy was so eager to get a fruit that she fell off her leaf and when she tried to get back again she could not, so she danced and skipped in the wind till at last a little child picked her up in her hand.

A flock of birds came and settled in the fairies' tree and told the fairies that they were going south. When the birds had rested they set off again. Some of the fairies went with them, but were soon unable to keep up with the birds and they glided to the ground and snuggled down in the grass for a long sleep.

B. DRULLER (Low. Remove).

The Little Squirrel.

There was a little Squirrel
Who was very gay,
And also he liked climbing trees,
And also liked to play.

One day when he was up a tree,
He saw a great big Bumble Bee.
"What are you doing?" the Bee cried out,
"I'm hunting nuts while you are about."

ALCESTER:
THE CHRONICLE OFFICE,
HIGH STREET.
